

Religious Inquirer.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER.—ISAIAH I. 18.

EDITED BY REV. RICHARD CARRIQUE.—HARTFORD, CONN. J. RUSSELL, PRINTER.

\$1 PER ANN. IN ADVANCE.] SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1822. [VOL. I.—NO. XXIV.

BISHOP WATSON,

On the Doctrines of Christianity.

When we speak concerning the truth of revealed religion, we include not only the certainty of the divine Missions of Moses and of Jesus, but the nature of the several doctrines promulgated by them to mankind. Now you may ask me, what these doctrines are? I know what they are to me; but pretending to no degree of infallibility, I think it safer to tell you where they are contained, than what they are. They are contained in the Bible; and if, in the reading of that book, your sentiments concerning the doctrines of Christianity should be different from those of your neighbour, or from those of the church, be persuaded on your part, that infallibility appertains as little to you, as it does to the church of which you are a member, or to any individual who differs from you. Towards the church, you ought to preserve reverence and respect; and in your public teaching, you ought not, whilst you continue to minister in it, to disturb the public peace, by opposition to its doctrines; and towards individuals, of whatever denomination of Christians they may be, who differ from you, you ought to preserve charity of thought, and courtesy of conduct; and if you do this, your discordance of opinion will be attended with no mischief, public or private.

Many learned men have bestowed much useless labor in defining what are the fundamental verities of the Christian religion; useless I esteem it, because the same things are not fundamental to all men, and there is no infallible judge of controversy to settle the disputes which may arise. A Papist believes the doctrines of transubstantiation, of worshipping of images, of invocation of saints, of purgatory, of the insalvability (if the word may be admitted) of heretics, and of the infallibility of popes, councils, and churches, to be fundamental doctrines; a Protestant does not believe any of these doctrines to be fundamental. Protestants differ from each other in their sentiments concerning the Eucharist, concerning the Trinity, concerning satisfaction, original sin, and personal predestination; but the wisest amongst them do not esteem any particular opinion concerning any of these points, to be so fundamentally right, that salvation will not belong to those who think otherwise.

Personal predestination appears to many to be a doctrine full of impiety and despair. They think it impious, as it represents God to be a blind or malignant being; blind, if he dooms a man to eternal destruction, without knowing whether he will do good or evil; and malignant, if, knowing, he makes no distinction in his decrees between them who obey, and them who disobey him.—They think it a doctrine pregnant with despair; for now to be persuaded that you are inevitably doomed to everlasting punishment, that no future rectitude of conduct, no penitence for what is past, no supplication, no intercession, nothing which can be done by yourself, or by any other for you, can in the least avail to the altering of your fate; what is this, say they, but to overwhelm the soul with the blackness of despondent horror? Is it not, they ask, a more impious doctrine than that of Epicurus—for that represented God as not troubling himself in the government of the world, as making no distinction between the righteous and the wicked, as suffering both to die and become extinct? But this represents him as consigning to everlasting torments,

those whom he had from all eternity, determined to condemn.

This doctrine, which *St. Chrysostom*, amongst the ancients, and *Arminius*, amongst the moderns, reprobated as unworthy of God, has been zealously maintained by *Calvin* and *St. Austen*. In my humble judgment, they have done great service to Christianity, who have endeavored to show that it is not founded in Scripture. For nothing has contributed more to the propagation of Deism, than the making doctrines abhorrent from reason, parts of the Christian system. There may be doctrines above reason; but nothing, which is evidently contrary to reason, can ever be justly considered as a part of the Christian dispensation.

COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

Mr. Editor,

Men are naturally endowed with certain powers of mind, which render them adequate to distinguish betwixt truth and error, right and wrong. This may be inferred from the following Scriptures—"Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." And again, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right."

Men possessing a capacity to judge betwixt right and wrong, it is their duty to exercise their judgment in all matters in which they are interested, especially that of religion. John, the beloved disciple, says "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God." Paul says, to his Philippian brethren, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent"—(or, as some understand these last words, *that ye may try things that differ and are controverted.*)

Notwithstanding Scripture, reason, and common sense bear their united testimony to the truth, that men, generally, are qualified, and ought to judge for themselves in matters of religion, as well as in all others; yet there is a certain class of professed Christians who have been, and are still endeavoring (by unlawful means) to deprive men of their rights, which heaven has bestowed upon them.—The rights of free inquiry and private judgment, over which they were able, in the darker ages of the church, to triumph, they are sensible, if exercised, will defeat their deeply concerted schemes, which they have laid in order to support a favorite creed.

It has been, and now is the practice of this class of professed Christians, to tell those who do not believe in, nor assent to their supposed infallible creed, that they are in a carnal state, *blind*, and unable to judge; but that they themselves are *spiritually illuminated*, and of course are able to judge. When these spiritual tyrants, and *lordly bigots*, have succeeded in making the people believe this statement, it is not to be wondered at that the grossest absurdities are palmed upon them for genuine truth. When a system of faith is issued forth, with certain *minatory* and *dammatory* clauses annexed to it, which none can escape who call in question its truth, or refuse to comply with its requisitions; when it is asserted upon the authority of the word of several pious D. D's. that unless men *faithfully* believe every article contained in it, *they shall inevitably*

perish eternally, it is not surprising that those who are of a weak and pusillanimous make, should, without hesitancy, believe the whole to be truth, though it actually may be an imposition upon common sense, a medley of nonsense and contradiction. Were we to look abroad into the world, we should discover in innumerable instances, persons, who have been in this way first frightened out of their reason, and then into the belief of the grossest inconsistencies. Whatever may be said in favor of the exercise of external force, it is evident these compulsive measures were not those by which *the truth as it is in Jesus*, was first propagated and defended: neither can they be of service to the cause of truth and religion at the present day. They are imperious and tyrannical, contrary to the spirit and genius of the gospel. They are an infringement upon those rights of conscience, which ought ever to be preserved sacred and inviolable; and have a direct tendency to prevent all improvement in the science of pure religion; and are calculated to entail ignorance, error, and superstition to the latest generation.

The absurdity of this mode of defending and propagating religion, may be seen by contrasting it with that prescribed by the Apostle. "The servant of the Lord, (says he,) must not strive; but be gentle unto all men: apt to teach; patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

Those persons who resort to the methods we have mentioned, viz. that of discouraging freedom of inquiry and private judgment, in order to propagate their sentiments are base intruders upon the natural rights of man; because it is the natural right of every man to make the best use he can of his own intellectual faculties. They are enemies to truth and the gospel; because free examination is the way to truth, and the gospel gains ground the faster, the more its doctrines and evidences are examined. Those who set themselves up to judge for their neighbours, and endeavor to impose their opinions upon them without producing evidence in their support, are the enemies of God and man. They are impostors, and it is sincerely hoped they will be treated as such by community.

If man has a right to judge for himself, certainly no other has a right to judge for him; and to attempt it, is to strike at the most valuable interest of man, considered as a reasonable creature. That all men would exercise the rights of free inquiry and private judgment, which is the privilege of all, is the sincere and fervent desire of

PHILALETHERS.

If we consider how much the comfort or the uneasiness of all around us depends on the state of our temper; we should surely endeavor to render it sweet and accommodating.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

Mr. Editor,

If you think the following worthy of insertion in your useful paper, you are at liberty to publish it.

TO BELIEVERS IN ENDLESS MISERY.

Of all the subjects which tend to convey dejection into the contemplative mind, none seems more dreadful than that of endless misery. To have the belief deeply impressed upon my mind, that a fellow being with whom I have been connected in life, or with whom I have been closely united by the social ties of friendship, must be doomed to a state of never-ending-misery in the world to come for sin committed in this mortal state, would certainly overwhelm the feeble powers of my understanding; and cast an impenetrable gloom over the beautiful creation of God.—Is it possible for any one to picture to himself a more awful, a more heart-rending, or soul-destroying doctrine, than a never-ending state of inexpressible torment?

Consider, for a moment, your hell filled with your fellow creatures, perhaps those with whom you have spent an agreeable lifetime, burning in fire and brimstone, yea, more, your own children rolling and roasting in the fiery billows! how should you feel? What language could express your agony while beholding such a scene of horror?—Infants, bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh, bearing on their cheeks the smile of innocence—harmless as the dove—behold their tender limbs—see them clasped in their mother's arms—view them as the gift of heaven—and while beholding this pleasing prospect, anticipate endless torments to be their portion; and if you do not shudder at the thought then I think you must be destitute of the feelings of a Christian or a man. Can any reasonable being after one moments reflection, consign to an endless hell his enemy whom he is commanded to love; when at the same time he professes to be a follower of Him who had "compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way," who when he "was reviled, reviled not again;" who said that he "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them?"

Can that man be a Christian, who possesses a disposition to persecute those who do not believe in human creeds, and stigmatizes with the name of infidels all those who profess to believe in the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that all the nations, families, and kindreds of the earth shall be blessed in Christ the seed of Abraham?

O, ye believers in the endless misery of your fellow mortals, how can you refuse your assent to the promises and oath of God, and the testimony of all his holy prophets and apostles, when they unequivocally declare, that every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, that they have righteousness in Him, and that all shall know

Him, from the least to the greatest ; " that all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindred of the nations shall worship before him."

O deluded brethren, receive these testimonies as the truths of God ; reject the doctrines of men, and believe on Him who is the " justifier of the ungodly ;" and that the " restitution of all things" is a doctrine which " God hath spoken by the mouths of all his holy prophets since the world began ;" by believing which, you will " enter into rest." But can you enter into rest, under the full conviction that you yourself will be made endlessly miserable in the world to come ? No, you cannot ; it is utterly impossible. Well then, love your neighbor as you do yourself and you will not doom him, with one half of the human family, to an eternal hell, quicker than you will yourself.—Remember this.

" Love your enemies," is the declaration of Christ, the Saviour of the world ; but if love implies a disposition to torment endlessly and unmercifully, then love and hatred are synonymous terms. For if you hated them with an EVER-LASTING HATRED, you certainly could do no worse than to torment them without end ; no, not even the devil himself, (whom you describe as the very worst of all beings,) could inflict a more dreadful punishment ; and if you say, God will do this, you must perceive that you represent our Heavenly Father, " who is love," and " whose mercy endureth for ever," as cruel and revengeful as the infernal enemy of God and man.

O, ye ministers of eternal misery ! Come, listen to the soothing voice of inspiration, which declares " that God hath made of one blood all nations ;" that " all are brethren ;" that his " good pleasure is to gather together in one, all things in Christ ;" and that he " will do all his pleasure." " Preach peace to all that are afar off, and to all that are nigh ;" tell them, that " Christ hath made peace through the blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself," &c.—teach them that Christ died for us when we were sinners, and that " God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," and assure them that this reconciliation will be effected, " For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet."—All things must be subdued unto him. " And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that did put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

He that considers his Heavenly Father to be his enemy, or so filled with rage that he will cut him down, and assign him his portion with devils and damned souls, to be tormented through the wasteless ages of eternity, must be bereft of his senses, totally insane, or under strange delusions. But he that can look up to God as his Father, protector, and friend, beholds in him something that

far transcends the love of an earthly parent. Yes, he can behold a Being who is " good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works ;" " who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth." O what confidence can be placed in a Being who is infinitely good, infinitely lovely, and infinitely merciful.—Now let us say, in the words of the Apostle, " that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

A FRIEND TO ALL MEN.

Newtown.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

Mr. Editor.

In the month of August, being on a visit to the town of *Amenia*, N. Y. I received an invitation to hear a Mr. Harrison, a Presbyterian Missionary, deliver an evening Lecture. At the close of his discourse, he said he would relate an anecdote.—He stated that he had been on a Mission in the western parts of N. York—that at a certain place where there had been a great revival, there lived an Infidel, who had long been in the practice of ridiculing religion. This man happened one evening to attend meeting—returning home, a friend observed, they had a glorious meeting : Yes, said the Infidel, truly ; but I will not be a fool—I will not be converted. He went the second time, and was convicted in such an alarming degree, that when he got home, he walked the floor in the greatest agony imaginable. He told the Lord that he was mad with him, and that he might convert him, if he had a mind to. His horrid shrieks and groans alarmed his little son, who ran into the streets and called in the neighbors, who found the father in all the horror of an infuriated demon. This wonderful circumstance terminated in the hopeful conversion of this bold Infidelitous Universalist. A few days after, he went to a friend, whom he had deluded by the pernicious doctrine of Universalism, and said, Sir, I am come to redeem the counterfeit money I passed, viz. Universalism.—As the preacher said he knew the man, and had conversed with him since his conversion, as soon as he left his stand, I addressed him—and observed that as it was my boast to believe, that the doctrine which he called pernicious, was of God, and being a resident of New-York, I wished to know the name of the man alluded to, in order that I might call on him. He said it was a delicate matter, and he could not divulge his name. Please then, Sir, said I, give me the name of the town ? I cannot.—Then, Sir, give me the name of the county ? No, said he, do not urge me, do not urge me.—He left the School-House in great haste, much agitated. My last reply was, Sir, if you do not know any thing of the place, you ought to be

excused.—A Mr. Sanford, (a friend of this Missionary.) said he would give the name of the person, the next morning. But on being called upon by Mr. Milo Winchester, of Sharon, he could give no information, but said, it might be in Oxford, N. York.

J. WHITNAL.

REMARKS.

While we feel it our duty to expose the falsehoods which are resorted to, to prejudice the minds of the people against the doctrine of God's Universal Benevolence, we cannot help feeling grieved, that those who step forward in the world as ministers of Christ, and as professors of that religion which requires that we should speak the truth every man to his neighbor; and who ought to be examples of righteousness to mankind—should so far forget the high and holy vocation whereunto they profess to be called, as to violate those obligations, which are indispensable with the Christian. But such is the fact. Were we inclined to believe in TOTAL DEPRAVITY, we should consider these wilful misrepresentations and falsehoods, made by men claiming the sacred character of Servants of God—piety and all holiness—as the fullest evidence we could have of that depravity. We are persuaded that persons of every denomination, who have a due regard for the cause of the Redeemer, and who love truth, must feel wounded to see such base means resorted to, to put down any sentiment whatever, however erroneous they may consider it. We repeat it, we feel grieved for our brother, who hazarded the foolish and absurd story above related, but where shall we find an excuse? If there is any palliation for the wrong, it must be in that he was advised or urged by others older in the ministry, to exert himself in opposing Universalism. And as a transient preacher—young and inexperienced—full of zeal, and prompted by others—and probably conceiving that he should not be questioned—unfortunately, in an unguarded moment, overstept the bounds of truth, to aid what he considered the cause of truth.

There appears to be a number of persons who are called ministers—or Missionaries, who are out of employment, and are continually travelling about the country preaching. It so happens these gentlemen have their Sermons ready written, and all levelled at the doctrine of Universal Salvation. There is scarcely one in twenty of these itinerants, that can preach on any other subject, or at least they do not. Perhaps they are sent about the country for this purpose, and their Sermons prepared in Yale, or Andover, for them to deliver in certain places or parishes, where the settled clergyman's salary rests on too precarious a foundation to risk those broad assertions and misrepresentations, which the itinerant may with more safety spout from the desk.

We have no objection that preachers of every

denomination who see fit, or believe it to be their duty, should oppose the doctrine which we believe and advocate; they have a right so to do; and if they sincerely believe, that all who believe with us, are in danger of being eternally miserable, we are ready to acknowledge it is their duty to oppose the sentiment. But let it be done fairly—without the aid of falsehood or misrepresentation. We have no interest in error. We desire not to be misled;—convince us by fair argument, duly supported by Scripture and reason, and we yield to you the palm of victory. These stories of conversions of Universalists have been proved again and again to be false; but should they be proved true, this would be no evidence to a sincere and reflecting mind that the doctrine is false.

Every sincere and true believer, forms his faith on the divine testimony, not on what another believes; and if all the world were opposed to the sentiment but himself, it would make no difference with him. A Universalist from principle, and leaning on the word of God, it would make no difference, whether ten, or ten thousand believed—or once believing, had renounced the sentiment.

Should these remarks meet the eye of Mr. H. we hope it may prove a friendly motion to him, to be careful in future not to risk his reputation to please any man; nor to give support to a favorite theory by means which are disgraceful to a gentleman and a minister of Christ; and we humbly pray, that he, and others, who are engaged in the same work, may feel more of the powerful influence of divine love, and more of the spirit of righteousness, and a more sincere regard for truth.

[EDITOR INQ.]

FOR THE INQUIRER.

Of the explication of the Scriptures.

(No. 13. Continued from page 181.)

We were examining what have been the consequences of a numerous priesthood, their influence and controul over education, and their dark and mysterious learning upon Christianity, society, and themselves. We have attempted to show that Christianity had from these causes been totally corrupted at the period of the reformation. We intend to notice one more particular, as to the corruption of Christianity, from the causes referred to, which escaped the pruning knife of the reformation, and continues to the present day in its full vigour.

We allude to the establishment of what is called *Theological Science*, upon the basis of Christianity. According to the prevailing notions, Theology is a science, as much as Mathematics, Law, or Medicine. Science, is any thing which can be learned, or acquired; but according to the ordinary acceptation, it signifies a department or system of knowledge, and consists of a combina-

tion of facts and principles, the latter being only deductions or conclusions from the former. A mere collection of naked facts, however numerous or complicated they may be, cannot be dignified with the name of Science; there must be principles as well as facts, and consequently a process of deduction or reasoning by which those principles are established; for all principles except a few primary ones, which are self-evident, are only deductions from facts, and are the results of a process of reasoning which is more or less certain.

All sciences, except pure Mathematics, are subject to doubt and error, and are in a great measure hypothetical. They have been constantly changing from the earliest period of human knowledge; one system has succeeded to another: one theory has given way to make room for another theory, which, in its turn has yielded to a more plausible, or a more fortunate one.—The science of one age is regarded as error, delusion, pedantry, or black letter learning, in the next. But the principles of every science always remain the same, as all science, with the exception of the mathematics, consists of a knowledge of physical and moral truth, which are immutable and eternal. They form a part of the nature and constitution of things. The revolutions and changes which have taken place in the moral and physical sciences, that have prevailed at different periods, are not to be considered as so many actual changes in those sciences, but only as changes in the notions which mankind have entertained with respect to them. These changes demonstrate the uncertainty of human learning, and the mixture of light and shade, of truth and error, in the physical and moral sciences.

There is, however, one striking difference between physical and moral or metaphysical science. In the former, *new facts*, have been discovered, which have formed the principal cause of the changes which it has experienced; but the latter has received no new facts, no additional light, yet it has undergone more variations and changes than the former. This shows the abstruse and difficult nature of the subject, and the fallacy to which all metaphysical reasoning is exposed. In all moral or metaphysical science, there are some obvious truths; some indisputable principles; but these are blended with numerous errors, the result of assumed positions and fallacious reasoning.—It is not necessary to attempt to prove the abstruseness and uncertainty of all metaphysical knowledge; this is admitted by every one.

We have made these preliminary observations with a view to show what have been the consequences of converting the Christian religion into a metaphysical science. We say, metaphysical, because it cannot be denied that *school divinity* is a metaphysical science, and of all others the most abstruse, subtle, and hypothetical. We ask what

has been gained by building a system of theology upon the basis of the Christian religion? Every metaphysical science, as we have observed, is at best but a mixture of truth and error, of light and darkness; it is but an imperfect guide, an obscure and often deceptive light. It cannot be pretended that theology or school divinity has higher claims to infallibility, clearness and certainty, than other metaphysical sciences, or that it is less abstruse, doubtful, and unintelligible. It would be very easy to demonstrate, both by argument *a priori*, and *a posteriori*, that theology is the most abstruse and uncertain of all metaphysical science—that even its first principles are assumptions and disputable ground, and its reasoning the most inconclusive and fallacious. But if we admit school theology to stand on the same ground as other metaphysical sciences, what, we ask, is the consequence of engraving this scholastic learning into the Gospel? The moment Christianity becomes a metaphysical system of learning, it has, to say the least, *no higher claims to TRUTH and CERTAINTY*, than any other moral science. It is at once brought to a level with other branches of human learning; if it has no higher character for truth, it cannot have as to its origin or nature. It is true we hear about the *system of theology*, of Doctor A. and the *body of Divinity*, of the Rev'd Mr. B. &c. If we were not accustomed to these things this would appear marvellous enough. What is meant by this D. D's divinity, and that Reverend's system of theology? Is it to be understood that these are identical with Christianity? If so, they are useless, as containing only what can be found in the gospels; if they are any thing more, of what does this addition consist, and from whence was it obtained? Have these system-makers and creed-manufacturers, any new facts, any additional light? Have they a secret revelation of the divine will, not communicated to the rest of mankind? Or, have they a process of reasoning of which the rest of the world is ignorant?

It is clear that these systems of theology and bodies of divinity, of learned Doctors, are only schemes of human ingenuity and learning, and like every other system of human origin, subject to error and uncertainty. The system of divinity of a learned Doctor of that science has no greater claim to truth, than a system of medical theory, of a learned doctor of Physic. Medical science has been subject to great fluctuations, it is true, but no one can contend that it has experienced greater changes than that of school divinity. Do we not, then, perceive the consequences of converting Christianity into scholastic divinity? Is it not to destroy the divine origin and character of the Christian religion? What is revelation? Is it not a communication of certain moral and religious truths which were not known, or not properly understood before? These truths may be facts, principles, and maxims; but whatever they are, they must be essentially perfect and in-

telligible in themselves, without the aid of human learning or reason, and without being formed into a system by the ingenuity of man. If the truths of revelation are not essentially complete and intelligible in themselves, they can never become so by the reasoning of man, for human reasoning, upon this subject, as well as upon all others, must be exposed to error and uncertainty. If the truths of revelation, as communicated, do not constitute a system of divinity, can they be formed into one by priestly skill? Are these divine truths to be considered as only the *raw materials*, useless as they are, and fit only to be put into the hands of the ecclesiastical artizan, to be manufactured into useful commodities? Such, indeed, is the fact, according to prevailing opinions and practices.

TRENCHARD.

Religious Inquirer.

HARTFORD, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 1822.

John v. 28, 29. "*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.*"

[Concluded from page 182]

The passage under consideration has generally been considered by divines, as a parallel passage with Daniel xii. 2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Also, with Matt. xxv. 46. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." If these passages have reference to the same event, they need but one explanation. Daniel in the 1st verse, says, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of my people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. (2d. verse.) And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This evidently refers to circumstances attendant on the destruction of Jerusalem, as is proved by the testimony of Christ, in the 24th of Matthew. In giving the signs that would precede that destruction, He alludes to Daniel, and says, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place; then let them which be in Judea, flee unto the mountains," &c. and adds, almost in the language of Daniel, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And except those days be shortened there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."—Every careful reader must see that as the time of trouble immediately preceded the awakening of those who slept in the dust of the earth, and as the Saviour applies them to the destruction of Jerusalem, the consequences expressed in Daniel 2d. took place at that time, the days being shortened for the elect's sake.—After Jesus had notified his followers of the signs that would precede this destruction, and the calamities that would attend it, he declares, verse 34th, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."—If then, these things were to be fulfilled in that generation, it is absurd to be looking for them to take place several thousand years hence.

The passages under consideration were spoken to the Pharisees, in consequence of their seeking to slay him, because he had healed the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda, on the Sabbath day. To these superstitious bigots, he declares the authority he derived from the Father, who had sent him into the world; and Jesus undoubtedly is speaking of the new dispensation by him to be introduced into the world, and the consequences attending it. This is believed by divines generally, especially as referring to the 25th verse.—"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God," &c. That is, the voice of the Son of God is heard in the gospel—the dead, are those that are in spiritual darkness, blindness, and sin.

There is an expression in this verse that deserves notice. The first clause says, "the dead shall hear"—the latter clause,—"*and they that hear shall live.*"—This is tantamount to saying, they shall all live—that is, raised to the "resurrection of life." This seems to set aside the 29th verse, and render it useless. But if we attend carefully to the 24th verse, the difficulty vanishes. "He that HEARETH my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but IS passed from death unto life." It appears from this that BELIEF must be connected with hearing in order to possess eternal life; and as it is said, that he that believeth shall not come into condemnation, it certainly is implied, that he who heareth the word, and does not believe, will come into condemnation. Therefore the 29th may read thus: they who hear the "voice," or word of the Son of God, shall come forth, they that have done "good," that is, "believed," unto the resurrection of life—and they that have done evil, that is, believed not, to the resurrection of damnation, or condemnation—as it is written, he that believeth not is condemned already—while he that believeth, is saved by faith from condemnation.

A query may now suggest itself to the mind of the reader, viz. is the word graves ever used in the Scriptures in a figurative sense? We an-

swer. Yes. See Ezek. xxxvii. 12. "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." Again, verse 13. "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, Oh my people, and brought you up out of your graves." The reader is requested to examine the chapter. He will find that the dry bones are a representation of the wretched state of the house of Israel—scattered among the nations of the world, and in a state of blindness and darkness, which is represented by the grave, or graves. To bring them out of their graves, is, to bring them out of their dispersed state, and from darkness, to the repossession of their own land; and to all the privileges appertaining thereunto.

The Greek word, *Hades*, which is translated *grave*, according to PARKHURST, signifies, *obscure*, *dark*, *invisible*—therefore may be used with propriety in a figurative sense, denoting, that blindness which obscures or hides things from the mind, and that darkness which veils the understanding. To bring out of the graves, may then signify, as it does in Ezekiel, to bring out of obscurity and darkness. The voice of the Son of God effects this, in calling men from the darkness of heathen superstition, and the blindness of Jewish traditions and bigotry.

Elbridge, N. Y.

Rev'd Sir.

If the following circumstance should be deemed worthy a place in your useful columns, as it will serve to expose the blind superstition and bigotry of our age, you will confer a favor on your friend by giving it publicity.

J. WHITNAL.

In the town of Camillus, county of Onondaga, N. Y. there recently lived an aged brother of the denomination of Shakers. Being warned of his approaching dissolution, and feeling his dependence on our "God, who is the God of salvation, to whom belong the issues from death," called together his friends, to make the necessary arrangements for his departure; and placing the most implicit confidence in his son, P—— C——s, that he would grant an aged father his dying request, made choice of a neighboring minister of the Universal faith, to preach his funeral sermon. But this request was promptly denied, after his decease, by his unnatural son, who was a METHODIST, and who had made choice of a Methodist to preach on the occasion. This being the case, a brother of the deceased wished to be gratified by having the Minister of his brothers choice take a part of the exercises by supplicating the throne of grace, or addressing the mourners; but this request was also denied. As the conduct of the son, has been the subject of astonishment, in this vicinity, even among those who are not Universalists, I think a few editorial remarks would gratify

your readers, and be subservient to the cause of truth.

REMARKS.

It is probable that Mr. C. will attempt to justify himself for this unfeeling deed, on the plea that he acted conscientiously, and on this ground his Methodist brethren will attempt to defend him; but let them remember, that this plea has been made an excuse for the blackest of crimes, the vilest of deeds.

The Jews set up this claim, when they crucified the Redeemer. Saul of Tarsus acted conscientiously in persecuting the disciples of Christ. The Roman Catholics acted from the same feelings when they murdered men, women, and children, as heretics. Calvin undoubtedly conscientiously believed it was his duty to burn *Servetus*. Our ancestors thought they were doing God service when they whipped, hung, and banished Quakers, persecuted Baptists, and despised Methodists, and Mr. C. with the same spirit, yea, the same spirit which committed all these horrid deeds, refuses the dying request of an aged father, wounds the feelings of his dearest relations, and disgusts, by his unfeeling conduct, every person of sober sense and reflection, in his own neighborhood, who are not blinded by sectarian bigotry. Let him not say, we charge him too high, by saying he has acted by the same spirit which is the source of all those murders and crimes of deepest die, which have been perpetrated by one sect upon another. Let him first say, what induced him to deny the dying request of his father, and refuse the anxious solicitations of his uncle.—Will he say, that he believes Universalism to be a falsehood, and that he felt it to be his duty to refuse the request, and to oppose that sentiment to the utmost of his power? This he will say. All who have persecuted, have said the same. Now let him lay his hand upon his heart, and say, whether he would not, if the laws of our country admitted of it, use every method in his power, to destroy this doctrine he esteems erroneous, even to burning its advocates.

We call upon Mr. C. seriously to reflect upon his conduct. We wish him to bring himself in imagination, once more to the dying bed; let him look on the face of him whom he called father, and let him listen to the last words, perhaps, spoken by those lips from whom he has often received expressions of love and parental instruction, and let him hear the last dying request.—Can we believe, in this moment, that he looked in sullen silence, without replying? NO. Can we believe he refused a dying father his last request? NO. Then can we too severely censure a man who violated a trust reposed in him in the dying moment? NO. Is this the fruit of Methodist religion? We trust not. We cannot believe this is a fair sample. Nor can we believe that the feelings manifested by Mr. C. on this occasion, were the feel-

ings of his heart. We rather believe his conduct was the effect of evil counsel—the counsel of an over-zealous and hot headed adviser, who knew little of mankind, and less of the religion of Jesus. And this we are persuaded of, from the Sermon which was delivered at the funeral.

Should this unnatural son read these remarks, we entreat him to examine his heart, that he may learn what manner of spirit he is of.—And we pray that wisdom may open his eyes, that he may see the absurdity of his conduct, and learn that such deeds cannot aid the cause of religion; but rather have a tendency to produce disgust, and to sour the mind against a religion which sanctions the violation of sacred trust reposed by the dying—and the best feelings of the human heart.

YET ANOTHER—YES, ANOTHER VICTIM.

A Mrs. Beach, wife of Mr. Eleathan Beach, of Hamilton, N. Y. put an end to her existence on Monday the 2d. inst. by hanging herself in the barn.—It appears that Mr. and Mrs. Beach had formerly been members of the Presbyterian church, prior to their removal to Hamilton. For some reason they had not seen fit to unite themselves with the church in that place. Sometime last spring they were visited by the Presbyterian clergyman, who, in a very severe manner, reprimanded Mrs. B. for not uniting with the church, and held up his doctrine of election—eternal misery, &c. in such a manner as to alarm her very much. This alarm was kept up by a very pious family, living near, until Mrs. B. became disturbed in mind with the dreadful apprehension of eternal damnation. She at length concluded she was given up to reprobate mind, and given over to the devil.—She knew the devil would have her soul, &c.—In this state of mental derangement, she took advantage of the absence of her husband, who had gone a short distance from the house, fled to the barn, and with a silk handkerchief tied to the ladder on the side of the hay mow, she destroyed herself—furnishing another evidence of the horrid effects of Calvinism.

THE

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

PUBLISHED SEMI-MONTHLY—BY AN ASSOCIATION OF GENTLEMEN.

THIS work was commenced in November, 1821. The character and object of it cannot be better explained, than in the terms of the original proposals. "It is a Repository of free inquiry, and dispassionate discussion, upon the important subject to which it is primarily devoted; and its principal objects are, to attempt to counteract that tendency to superstition, which is incident to human nature; to explain and illustrate the Sacred Scriptures, as they are understood by those who believe in the Universal Benevolence of God, and that from Him cometh every good and perfect gift; to inspire just and exalted ideas of the divine character and goodness; to support and extend the authority and dominion of reason; to combat, by the all-powerful weapons of argument and truth, dangerous errors and prejudices, and the base attempts to enslave the human mind, and to erect a temporal dominion upon the moral weakness and delusions of man; to disseminate useful information, rational, liberal, and enlightened sentiments; to present in the images of truth, the deformity of vice, the odiousness of bigotry and intolerance, and the loveliness of virtue and charity—in fine, to extend the knowledge as the only means of promoting the happiness and peace of mankind.

"Its matter is doctrinal, controversial, historical, practical, and articles of religious intelligence and miscellany."

How far the work has sustained the character, and promoted the objects originally disclosed, the Publishers will not undertake to say. But they must be permitted to observe, that if success is any evidence of merit, this Publication has not disappointed the expectation of its friends. It was commenced under no auspicious circumstances. Situated in the midst of a community which has long been regarded as the seat of superstition and intolerance, and where Calvinism and orthodoxy exist in their most odious forms, and are supported by the most powerful combinations; it has had to contend with all the opposition originating from passion, prejudice, bigotry, interest, ignorance, and a spirit of religious domination and intolerance. It was predicted, that it would not live one year; and if the authors of these predictions are proved to be "false prophets," it will not be from any neglect on their part, to do all in their power to bring about the event they had foretold. The utmost pains have been taken by those whose business it is to administer spiritual food to the people, to keep the "Inquirer" from them, and even to prevent its being known that there was any such publication in existence. But notwithstanding all these obstacles, it has worked its way into extensive circulation, and we have reason to believe, with the smiles of Providence, has been the instrument of breaking the chains, and opening the eyes of many, who were in the bondage of superstition, and groping their way in darkness.—It commenced with a subscription of only between three and four hundred, and we can safely say, it has now more than three times that number. Such success was never anticipated by the Publishers.

The work will we edited, as heretofore, by the Rev. R. CARRIQUE, and will be continued on the original plan.—The past is the best assurance we can give of the future. It is evident that an unusual spirit of inquiry exists upon religious subjects; a number of liberal and useful publications have sprung up within a few years past, in different parts of our country; and their circulation must have the most extensive and happy effect.

Whilst we return our thanks to our Agents, and friends abroad, for their kindness and exertions, we invite them to continue their efforts in obtaining subscriptions for the Inquirer.

The liberal patronage which it has received, will enable the Publishers to present the Second Volume in an entire new dress, which will increase the matter equal to two pages, besides improving its appearance. The TERMS will be the same as the First Volume—One Dollar, payable in advance. This increase of matter, and consequent increase of expense, would justify an addition to the price, more especially as we believe it is now one of the cheapest Publications in the country; but as profit forms no part of the object of the Publishers, and as it is hoped that the increased circulation will compensate for the additional expense, they determined to retain the original terms.

Those who obtain Ten additional Subscribers, shall be entitled to a copy gratis.—All remittances and communications directed (post paid) to the "Religious Inquirer."

The Second Volume will commence about the 10th of November next; and those having Subscription Papers, are requested to return them before that time, as it is necessary to know, at the commencement of the Volume, the number of the copies that may be wanted. Those wishing the First Volume, can be supplied. An Index will be furnished at the close of each Volume.

HARTFORD, September, 1822.